

Maryland SHIP "Health Action" Newsletter

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May 23, 2013

Allegany County Health Department Preparing Opioid Overdose Prevention Plan



Saving people from death or injury because they've overdosed on opioids, whether legal like oxycodone or illegal like heroin, is the focus of a plan being developed by team members at the Allegany County Health Department. In Allegany County, total deaths related to drug or alcohol intoxication were 15 in 2010 and 12 in 2011, the most recent years for which data was available. Eleven

of the 2010 deaths were related to opioids, as were eight in 2011. Many people admitted to the hospital because of overdoses did not die. In 2012, there were 126 non-alcohol-related overdose cases at the hospital and, by mid-April of 2013, 47 people have been reported as overdose patients, according to county health officials.

Prevention strategies include educating health care professionals about addictions to drugs such as prescription painkillers; expanding the data from the health system to include more information about the specific drug that is the cause of an overdose; developing a unified policy on painkiller prescriptions; looking at whether there are pockets of abuse in the community with higher rates of problems than others and working more intensively in those areas at prevention. Allegany County's unused expired medicine drop-off program is one prevention strategy that has successfully kept drugs out of the hands of children and abusers in a family, and from making their way to dealers in prescription opioids.

Click [here](#) to read the full story.

View the [SHIP measure](#) and [tools](#) for reducing drug and alcohol related intoxication deaths.

**AHRQ Releases 2012 National Healthcare Quality
and Disparities Reports**

Each year since 2003, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has reported on progress and opportunities for improving health care quality and



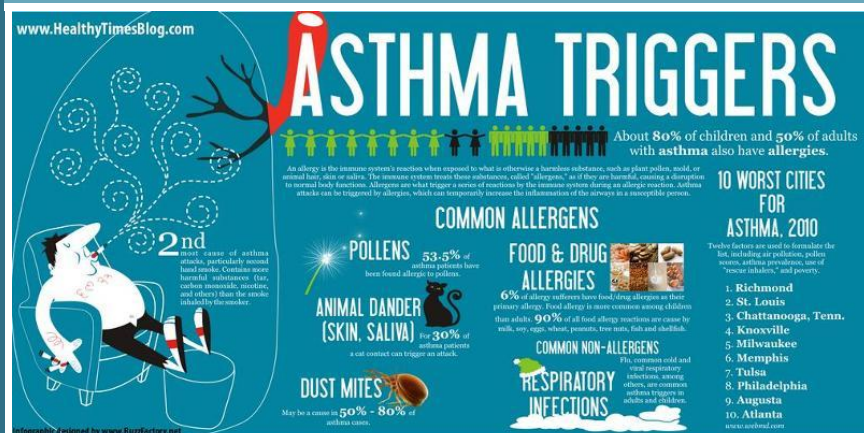
reducing health care disparities. The National Healthcare Quality Report (NHQR) focuses on "national trends in the quality of health care provided to the American people." The National Healthcare Disparities Report (NHDR) focuses on "prevailing disparities in health care delivery as it relates to racial factors and socioeconomic factors in priority populations." Three themes from the 2012 NHQR and NHDR emphasize the need to accelerate progress if the Nation is to achieve higher quality and more equitable health care in the near future:

- Health care quality and access are suboptimal, especially for minority and low-income groups.
- Overall quality is improving, access is getting worse, and disparities are not changing.
- Urgent attention is warranted to ensure continued improvements in:
 - Quality of diabetes care, maternal and child health care, and adverse events.
 - Disparities in cancer care.
 - Quality of care among states in the South.

Click [here](#) to read the 2012 NHQR report. Click [here](#) to read the 2012 NHDR report.

View the [SHIP measure](#) and [tools](#) to increase the proportion of persons with health insurance.

May is Asthma Awareness Month



Asthma is one of the most common lifelong chronic diseases. There are 26 million people in the U.S. living with asthma, a disease affecting the lungs, causing repeated episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing. Although asthma cannot be cured it is possible to manage

asthma successfully to reduce and prevent asthma attacks, also called episodes. Asthma affects people of all ages and backgrounds. In most cases, we don't know what causes asthma, and we don't know how to cure it.

Successful asthma management includes knowing the warning signs of an attack, avoiding things that may trigger an attack, and following the advice of your healthcare provider. When you control your asthma, you will breathe easier, be as active as you would like, sleep well, stay out of the hospital, and be free from coughing and wheezing. With your healthcare provider's help, you can make your own asthma management plan so that you know what to do based on your own symptoms. Use your asthma medicine as prescribed and be aware of common triggers in the environment known to bring on asthma symptoms, including smoke (including second-hand and third-hand cigarette smoke), household pets, dust mites, and pollen. Limit or avoid exposure to these and other triggers whenever possible.

Click [here](#) to learn more about how you can control your asthma.

Click [here](#) to learn more about identifying asthma triggers in your home.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program.

View the [SHIP measure](#) and [tools](#) to reduce hospital emergency department visits due to asthma.

May is Stroke Awareness Month



Only 38 percent of Americans recognize the most common symptoms of a stroke, according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) survey. Stroke experts say everyone should know the signs of a stroke—it's the leading cause of death in the U.S. and kills nearly 130,000 Americans each year. Speedily

identifying stroke symptoms and calling for an ambulance is essential because people who get to an emergency room for treatment within three hours are healthier three months later than people for whom stroke care was delayed.

New this year to help increase symptom awareness is a free smartphone app from the [American Heart Association/American Stroke Association](#) called [F.A.S.T.](#) The acronym stands for common stroke symptoms and a critical call to action: **F**ace drooping; **A**rm weakness; **S**peech difficulty; and **T**ime to call 9-1-1. The app also includes a link to additional symptoms that bystanders and caregivers can access and a 9-1-1 button to call an ambulance. Using the 9-1-1 button saves time by not having to back out of the app to dial the number manually. Using the button also generates an automatic time stamp, which gives emergency room staff a good indication of when symptoms began as some treatments can only be given within a specific time window.

Click [here](#) to learn more about stroke signs and symptoms as well as the F.A.S.T. app.

News from the Office of Primary Care Access

Health Care Innovation Awards Round Two

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for round two of the Health Care Innovation Awards in the amount of \$1 billion. All applicants must submit, as part of their application, the design of a payment model that is consistent with the new service delivery model that they propose. For more information about the FOA click [here](#).

Lt. Governor Brown Announces \$517,000 in Grant Funding to Support Health Information Technology Adoption in Four Maryland Nursing Homes

Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown and the Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC), in collaboration with the Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients (CRISP), the state-designated health information exchange (HIE), announced \$517,000 in grant funding for four independent nursing homes around Maryland. The funds will be used to facilitate the adoption and use of health IT among independent nursing homes to support improved coordinated care between hospitals and nursing home facilities. For more information click [here](#).